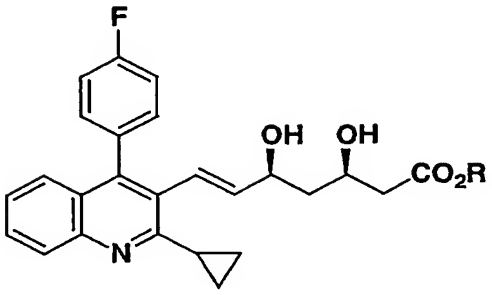
CLAIMS

1. A method for producing a compound of the formula (1):



(1)

which comprises subjecting a solution containing an alkyl (3R,5S)-7-[2-cyclopropyl-4-(4-fluorophenyl)quinolin-3-yl]-3,5-dihydroxy-6-heptenoate of the formula (1) (wherein R is a C_{1-4} alkyl group) to liquid chromatography treatment using silica gel as the packing material, to separate its epimers contained therein.

2. The method according to Claim 1, wherein in the chromatography treatment, a mixed solvent comprising hexane/isopropyl alcohol is used as an eluent.

3. The method according to Claim 2, wherein the ratio of hexane/isopropyl alcohol in the mixed solvent is from 99/1 to 50/50 in a volume ratio.

4. The method according to any one of Claims 1 to 3, wherein the silica gel as the packing material has an average particle diameter of from 0.1 μm to 10 mm and an average pore diameter of from 1 nm to 100 μm.

5. The method according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, wherein the chromatography treatment is a treatment employing a simulated moving bed apparatus.

6. The method according to Claim 5, wherein either component of the eluent is added to a distillate of the extract and raffinate recovered in the chromatography treatment, to adjust the compositional ratio of the distillate to the compositional ratio of the eluent before use, and the distillate so adjusted, is reused.

7. The method according to any one of Claims 1 to 6, wherein R in the compound of the formula (1) is an ethyl group.